Victoria University of Wellington
Strategic Plan
Capital thinking.
Globally minded.
The Strategic Plan was confirmed by Council at its meeting of Monday 29 September 2014 and signed on behalf of Council:

Ian McKinnon
Chancellor
Vice-Chancellor’s Introduction

Victoria University of Wellington was founded in 1897. Prominent among the motives for Victoria’s establishment was the pressing need for the nation’s capital and its region to be supported by a public university. Today, Victoria University views this mandate of civic engagement in a global context and is determined to ensure that its local communities benefit from the University’s internationally respected academic excellence.

One of the distinctive features of Victoria is its ability to draw upon the national thinking and global mindedness of its capital city community. As a result, Victoria is in an ideal position to revitalise the civic university tradition with a national and international outlook; to redefine the ‘local-civic university’ as the ‘global-civic university’. In so doing, the University highlights its commitment to civil society and global citizenship, declares its determination to contribute to the resolution of international challenges and affirms its intent to prepare critically informed, globally confident, civic-minded graduates.

This international perspective reinforces rather than diminishes Victoria’s commitment to its locality—Wellington, New Zealand and the wider Asia-Pacific region. This is the area of the world that sustains the University, its staff and students, and that increasingly defines its institutional identity and future. Victoria will employ its international academic leadership for the benefit of this region, helping to bind the global to the local and the local to the global.

This Strategic Plan outlines a 20-year path for Victoria University of Wellington that is unreservedly ambitious, in keeping with the confidence and aspirations of the University’s Council, staff, students, alumni and communities.

The plan commits the University to uphold a set of institutional values and enunciates a mission and purpose. Six primary strategies span Victoria’s Strategic Plan: academic emphasis, the quality of its research, teaching, learning and student experience, its focus on inclusivity, its engagement with its communities and the depth of the University’s intellectual influence in its region and beyond. A cluster of five enabling strategies covers priorities such as the employment of world-class scholars, the increased scale of the University, the effectiveness of its processes, the sustainability of its revenue and the communication of the quality of its research and teaching.

The development of this Strategic Plan has required us to pause to consider our shared future. We now envision Victoria University of Wellington as a world-leading capital city university; one of the great global-civic universities. It is time to set confidently about making this happen.

Professor Grant Guilford
Vice-Chancellor

1 Defined for these purposes as Australasia, Asia, Oceania and the Pacific Rim, including the Americas, Antarctica and the Southern Ocean.
This artwork was carved by Victoria alumnus Jamie Boynton. It represents a manaia, a demi-god sometimes depicted as a fish and at other times a bird. This ancient art form, found in the earliest of Māori carvings, reminds us of the need for humility towards other people, towards knowledge and towards learning. A manaia forms part of the Victoria University crest, an initiative of Victoria’s first Māori Studies Professor, Sir Hirini Moko Mead.
Vision

Victoria University of Wellington will be a world-leading capital city university and one of the great global-civic universities.

Mission and Purpose

Victoria University of Wellington’s mission is to undertake excellent research, teaching and public engagement in the service of local, national, regional and global communities.

Primary Strategies

1. Adopt a distinctive academic emphasis
2. Enhance research quality, quantity and impact
3. Provide a holistic learning, teaching and student experience that is second to none
4. Secure the intellectual potential put at risk through experience of disadvantage
5. Deepen engagement with alumni, benefactors and communities
6. Deepen Victoria University’s intellectual influence in the Asia-Pacific region

Enabling Strategies

1. Double the community of world-class scholars choosing Victoria
2. Attain the scale, quality and academic profile of leading public universities
3. Optimise the University’s organisation, processes, facilities and use of resources
4. Increase and diversify sustainable revenue
5. Communicate the quality, values and distinctiveness that define Victoria

Values

Victoria University of Wellington’s core ethical values are respect, responsibility, fairness, integrity and empathy. These values are manifested in our commitment to civic engagement, sustainability, inclusivity, equity, diversity and openness. We prize intellectual rigour and independence, academic freedom, critical inquiry and excellence.
Housed in the historic Government Buildings on our Pipitea campus, Victoria’s Faculty of Law is ranked among the top in the world.
Vision Statement

Victoria University of Wellington will be a world-leading capital city university and one of the great global-civic universities. The University will adopt a distinctive academic emphasis, underpinned by excellence and with a particular focus on advancing Wellington, New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific region.

Victoria will be imbued with distinctive qualities through its values and through the Treaty of Waitangi, mātauranga Māori and te reo Māori. The University will be distinguished internationally by the excellence of its fundamental and applied research, the success of its alumni and the depth of its intellectual influence.

The student experience at Victoria, the quality and relevance of the teaching and learning and the career opportunities that result will be second to none. Victoria’s staff, postgraduate and undergraduate students will be proud of the role they play in cultivating intellectual, social, cultural and creative capital. They will thrive in Victoria’s highly creative, multidisciplinary and entrepreneurial environment.

The University will attain the scale, quality and academic profile appropriate to a leading public university. Victoria will be respected for leading thinking on the major issues confronting environmental, societal, cultural and economic wellbeing, for resolutely fulfilling its ‘critic and conscience’ role and for its contribution to the betterment of society.
The exact origins of this Māori cloak are unknown, but it is thought to have been gifted to a vice-chancellor of Victoria University. Made from kiwi, tui and kākā feathers, this historic cloak belongs to Te Kawa a Māui (School of Māori Studies). The cloak was photographed in the J.C. Beaglehole Room, Kelburn campus.
Heritage and Position

Victoria University of Wellington’s character as a capital city university was first suggested in 1886 by the University’s founder, Robert Stout: ‘So far as Wellington is concerned, it is the seat of Parliament and the seat of the Court of Appeal. This city might be prominent for its special attention to jurisprudence, to law, to political science, to history.’

The contemporary position of Victoria University as New Zealand’s globally ranked, capital city university reflects this history and embodies three pillars. First, Victoria focuses deliberately on New Zealand, its principal community of interest. Aotearoa New Zealand is a multicultural, democratic, egalitarian society with deep roots in the Pacific and Europe, a unique bicultural and natural heritage and an Asia-Pacific future.

Secondly, Victoria is internationally respected, ranking well within the best 5 percent of the world’s universities and in the top 1–2 percent in areas such as law, humanities, business, education and earth sciences.

Thirdly, consistent with the civic university tradition, Victoria engages closely with New Zealand’s capital city. This affords its staff and students privileged access to political, public sector, legal, diplomatic, cultural, scientific, corporate, community, media and non-governmental organisations, as well as to the nation’s archived heritage, its cultural taonga.

This civic engagement provides the opportunity to enrich national culture and to lead thinking on major societal and environmental issues. It positions the University to play an important role in the facilitation of innovation, entrepreneurship and sustainable economic growth.

And, in keeping with the international connections of Wellington and the University, it offers Victoria a valuable opportunity to create bridges between communities and to influence thinking in the wider Asia-Pacific region and global community.

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Values and Commitments

Victoria University of Wellington’s core ethical values are respect, responsibility, fairness, integrity and empathy. These values are manifested in our commitment to civic engagement, sustainability, inclusivity, equity, diversity and openness. We prize intellectual rigour and independence, academic freedom, critical inquiry and excellence.

Leadership, creativity and entrepreneurship, whether social, cultural or commercial, are at the heart of our capacity to imagine, to express new possibilities, to find new solutions to complex issues.

With, and as, tangata whenua, we value te Tiriti o Waitangi, rangatiratanga (leadership), manaakitanga (the generous fostering of knowledge), kaitiakitanga (responsibility for, and guardianship of, knowledge), whai mātauranga (intellectual curiosity), whanaungatanga (collaboration and collectiveness) and akoranga (collective responsibility for learning).

Mission and Purpose

Victoria University of Wellington’s mission is to undertake excellent research, teaching and public engagement in the service of local, national, regional and global communities.
Primary Strategies

Primary Strategy 1—Adopt a distinctive academic emphasis

Victoria University will foster an academic emphasis in keeping with its vision, mission and academic strengths and that draws upon its position as New Zealand’s globally ranked capital city university. The academic emphasis of the University will be defined by the multidisciplinary themes outlined below, underpinned by excellent, fundamental, disciplinary-based research. These themes will promote an outlook that goes beyond disciplinary, school, faculty and other traditional boundaries, and will frame and develop Victoria’s distinctive teaching, research and public engagement endeavours. They will contribute to local, national and global challenges, with a particular emphasis on Wellington, New Zealand and the wider Asia-Pacific region.

The themes are:

→ advancing better government
→ cultivating creative capital
→ spearheading our digital futures
→ enabling our Asia-Pacific trading nation
→ stimulating a design-led, high-value manufacturing region
→ enhancing the resilience and sustainability of our natural heritage and capital
→ improving health and wellbeing in our communities
→ enriching national culture, civil society and global citizenship.
Dr Carolyn Wilshire, a senior lecturer in Victoria’s School of Psychology, with PhD student Joshua Faulkner. Dr Wilshire’s research seeks to advance our understanding of the mental processes engaged when people use language, and the neural structures that support these processes. Much of her research focuses on examining language in special populations, such as people who have dyslexia, or have had a stroke or brain tumour.
Primary Strategy 2—Enhance research quality, quantity and impact

Victoria University will enhance its research quality and will retain and build upon its position as the first-ranked university of the Performance-Based Research Fund. Victoria will improve the international profile and impact of its research by increasing the quantity of top-quality research and scholarship performed. The University will undertake more collaborative, translational, multidisciplinary research to complement its strengths in investigator-led, fundamental, discipline-based research. Victoria will double its research revenue, invention disclosures, patent applications, licences and technological innovations, as well as the citations from its quality-assured research outputs.
Primary Strategy 3—Provide a holistic learning, teaching and student experience that is second to none

The quality of the student experience at Victoria University, both in and beyond the setting of formal learning, will be second to none among its peers. It will be highly valued by students and graduates of all ages and stages, giving them a sense of belonging to vibrant and inclusive student, university and civic communities. The University’s research-enriched learning culture will be characterised by professional course and programme design that fosters a high level of student engagement, by excellent learning opportunities and facilities and by effective use of digital technologies for learning and teaching. Staff will provide students with attentive supervision and will enhance their personal development, wellbeing skills and commitment to lifelong learning. Teaching practices will be inclusive and continually refreshed by attention to evolving methodologies and technologies. Victoria will draw upon its capital city location to provide students access to extracurricular programmes that extend their learning and deepen its relevance to career opportunities. A distinctive Student Charter and Graduate Profile will guide the development of resilient, capable and confident graduates whose critical thinking, creativity and highly developed communication skills will prepare them well for dynamic career outcomes and for global citizenship.
Primary Strategy 4—Secure the intellectual potential put at risk through experience of disadvantage

Victoria University will endeavour to increase enrolments of talented students currently denied access to university study by their social, cultural or financial circumstances or by disabilities. Victoria will enrol 1,000 Māori students over and above the current number and reach a similarly increased proportion of Pasifika students. The progression of students from under-represented groups to postgraduate study is vital if the University, and New Zealand more generally, are to have the opportunity to employ additional talented and qualified staff representing the diversity of New Zealand society. Victoria will maximise its efforts to recruit such students and retain them through to successful Master’s and doctoral degrees. In addition, the University will do all it can to help the nation to secure the intellectual potential of these ‘missing thousands’ through collaboration with schools and communities, through the focus and quality of its teacher education programmes and through the outcomes of each of the distinctive academic themes identified on page 13.
Rick Zwaan, the 2015 Victoria University of Wellington Students’ Association president, captured this image of students who attended a political debate on student issues. Held just a few days before the 2014 New Zealand General Election, over 500 students assembled in the Hub to hear Members of Parliament from across the political spectrum discuss the key issues facing tertiary students.
Primary Strategy 5—Deepen engagement with alumni, benefactors and communities

In keeping with its global-civic university character, Victoria University will build closer ties with alumni, benefactors and communities. More opportunities will be provided for involvement in advisory board, mentoring, volunteer and advocacy roles. There will be more regular celebration of alumni success. Victoria will strengthen its involvement with communities, including the public service, the diplomatic community, the professions, the business community, cultural organisations, non-governmental organisations, iwi and Pasifika groups. There will be greater community involvement in the development of learning outcomes, advice on educational relevance and the provision of workplace experience. Victoria will extend the practice of enriching teaching with practitioner perspectives. In support of stakeholders, staff will increasingly conduct applied research, consultancy and professional development. Entrepreneurial engagement with communities to achieve social, cultural and commercial objectives will be commonplace. A philanthropic campaign will be launched to provide alumni and benefactors with opportunities to achieve community outcomes through their engagement with Victoria University.
Victoria welcomed the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Hon Peter O’Neill (pictured centre), for the first time in 2013. As part of efforts to strengthen ties with the rapidly developing Pacific country, an agreement that enables students from Papua New Guinea to complete PhD studies and develop wider relationships at Victoria was signed during the visit.
Primary Strategy 6—Deepen Victoria University’s intellectual influence in the Asia-Pacific region

Victoria University will enhance its contribution to the resolution of global challenges. The University’s biggest contribution will be made to those challenges that align with its areas of academic emphasis and that have a significant impact on the wider Asia-Pacific region. In this regard, as New Zealand’s globally ranked capital city university, Victoria is ideally positioned to influence government policy and practice in the region. Victoria’s contribution to policy will be derived from the University’s strengths in the relevant academic disciplines and from effective engagement with local, national and regional concerns. Effective engagement with policy in the Asia-Pacific region requires Victoria to strengthen its relationship with the public sector and the diplomatic community in Wellington while retaining the independence to engage critically with government in a non-partisan fashion. The University must also have a leading law school and be the university of choice for the humanities, social sciences and education. It must continue to develop its world-class faculties of Business, Science, Engineering and Architecture and Design in order to enhance its ability to convey reliable scientific knowledge and modern business practice to government officials, communities and the business sector throughout the region.
Professor Chris Marshall is the inaugural holder of the Diana Unwin Chair in Restorative Justice at Victoria. Professor Marshall is establishing a national hub of research and teaching excellence in restorative justice theories, policies and practices at the University. His research is supported by the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Department of Corrections, New Zealand Police, Ministry of Social Development, New Zealand Defence Force, Accident Compensation Corporation and the Grace Memorial Trust.
Enabling Strategies

The primary strategies will be supported by a platform of enabling strategies. These strategies will be focused on creating the capability, scale, organisational excellence, facilities, resources and reputation that are critical for success.

Enabling Strategy 1—Double the community of world-class scholars choosing Victoria

To achieve its vision, Victoria University will need to increase significantly the number of indubitably world-class scholars it employs. This will require the creation of a vibrant, highly creative, supportive and inclusive environment that encourages the recruitment, development and retention of a diverse community of eminent academic staff and top students. This community will include highly talented postgraduate students and early-career academics who have the potential to be world leading in their disciplines. It will also comprise talented and valued general staff capable of developing and sustaining the high-performing organisational platform necessary for first-rate academic performance.
Enabling Strategy 2—Attain the scale, quality and academic profile of leading public universities

To have the impact that defines a great global-civic university, Victoria University must attain the scale typical of other leading public universities. For this, the University must nearly double its current size to approximately 30,000 equivalent full-time students (EFTS). To achieve this goal, while maintaining quality, Victoria will target a sustained period of EFTS growth topping 1.5 percent per annum. The academic profile of the University will move towards a higher percentage of total EFTS as taught postgraduates (from 9 percent towards 18 percent), research postgraduates (from 6.5 percent towards 8 percent) and international students (from 12.5 percent towards 18 percent). Two essential prerequisites for such growth with quality are academic excellence and the maintenance of appropriate student to staff ratios.

Enabling Strategy 3—Optimise the University’s organisation, processes, facilities and use of resources

Victoria University will implement a strategically aligned management structure that empowers leadership throughout the University and that is easily comprehensible to stakeholders. Business fundamentals will be executed well to create a platform for academic success. Key business processes at Victoria will be viewed as best-practice models and will operate on a ‘train, trust and audit’ model to reduce unnecessary compliance costs. Ongoing, carefully planned campus development and modernisation of equipment and information technology will enhance research, teaching, the student experience and administrative efficiency. Thorough planning will allow the University to attain scale with optimum functionality and cost-effectiveness. By encouraging more efficient use of time, Victoria will increase protected scholarly time and improve academic quality, creativity and productivity.
Victoria PhD student Jenni Hopkins captured this image of third-year Earth Sciences students during a field trip near Mt Ngauruhoe. Volcanologist Professor Colin Wilson, who is a current James Cook Fellow, is teaching the group about historical volcanic eruptions in the region.
Enabling Strategy 4—Increase and diversify sustainable revenue

Victoria University is cost-effective against benchmarks but is constrained by insufficient discretionary revenue. While cost control is very important, universities cannot save their way to excellence. Diversified revenue growth is vital for sustainable academic success. Through careful implementation of all of the above primary and enabling strategies, Victoria will achieve real revenue growth of a minimum of 3 percent per annum. A minimum of 3.5 percent of its revenue will be retained as surplus for reinvestment in the University’s research, teaching and public engagement.

Enabling Strategy 5—Communicate the quality, values and distinctiveness that define Victoria

Victoria University’s success will be built on all of the strategies above and will also require effective communication of the quality, values and distinctiveness that define Victoria. To ensure Victoria has impact and influence commensurate with its achievements, the University will effectively convey the quality of its teaching, research and public engagement by way of academic conduits (such as publications, reports, public commentary, symposia, performances and exhibitions), marketing, media outlets, communication channels, relationship networks and ranking agencies.
Implementation

The Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually during the 2015–2019 period and will be comprehensively revised for each ensuing five-year period. The enactment of the Plan will be guided by a detailed implementation plan. Progress towards strategic goals will be monitored by way of a comprehensive framework of proximate indicators. Through this iterative approach, a focus will be maintained on the Plan, ensuring that it continues to meet its purpose and remains appropriate to ongoing changes in the external environment.